

MIDDLE TN

Cheatham County cold case victim identified 40 years later; Search continues for killer

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CHEATHAM COUNTY, Tenn. (WKRN) — A juvenile Jane Doe killed more than 40 years ago has now been identified as **Linda Sue Karnes**, according to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI), and they are now searching for the person who killed her.

In the early 1980s, skeletal remains were found at what was then the county's old landfill on Highway 249 in Ashland City. TBI agents began working alongside the Cheatham County Sheriff's Office to investigate the death. Forensic anthropologists at the University of Tennessee determined the remains belonged to that of a young, white female, originally estimated to be between 14 and 17 years old.

TBI identifies homicide victim in 1986 Claiborne County cold case

According to the UT Anthropology Department, the girl was estimated to have been deceased for three to nine years prior to the discovery of her remains on Oct. 21, 1981. After exhausting all leads, investigators could not determine the victim's identity, and she was classified as a Jane Doe.

A sample of her remains was sent to the University of North Texas Center for Human Identification (UNTCHI), where DNA profile was developed and entered into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) and the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System in hopes that the girl would be eventually identified.



Linda Sue Karnes (Courtesy: TBI)

Last December, as part of the [TBI's Unidentified Human Remains DNA Initiative](#), TBI agents submitted a sample of the girl's remains to the private lab Othram Inc. for further forensic genetic genealogical testing. Scientists at Othram were able to provide agents information of possible relatives connected to the girl, which the TBI used to locate those potential family members.

After making contact, the family said there was a relative they had not heard from in more than four decades, and they submitted DNA to test against the Jane Doe, leading to the positive identification of Karnes.

Cold case victim identified after 38 years through TBI genealogical DNA testing initiative

According to the TBI, Karnes was originally from Cleveland but grew up in Cunningham, Tennessee. Prior to her death, she spent time in Montgomery County Girls Home in Clarksville.

TBI special agents are hoping the public can help provide information that may help solve the Karnes' murder.

If you have information about this homicide, specifically any knowledge about individuals Linda may have been with before her death, please call **1-800-TBI-FIND**.